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ABSTRACT

This module presents an overview of the background of Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. and an explanation of the migrant's current situation. Upon completion of this module the participant will be able to (a) describe the cultural roots of the migrants, (b) list reasons for the migration after 1898, (c) characterize the migration since 1950, and (d) explain how Puerto Rican migration differs from that of other migrant groups. The student completes a preassessment test, reads the attached narrative entitled "The Puerto Rican Migration," chooses tasks from a list of alternatives, and concludes the module with a postassessment test. (A 23-item bibliography is included.) (PB)

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TEACHER CORPS BILINGUAL PROJECT
UNIVERSITY OF HARTFORD
WEST HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT
DR. PERRY A. ZIRKEL, DIRECTOR

MODULAR SEQUENCE:
PUERTO RICAN PUPILS
IN MAINLAND SCHOOLS

TTP 003.02 MIGRATION PATTERNS OF THE PUERTO RICAN

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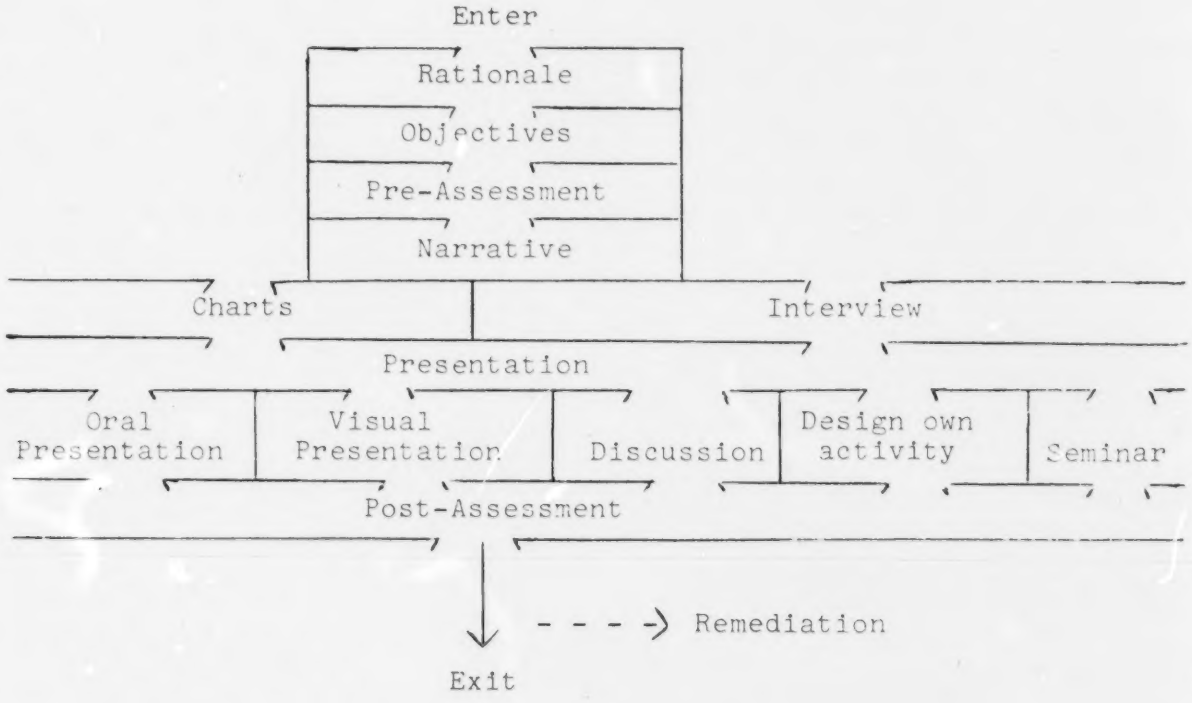
MIGRATION PATTERNS OF THE PUERTO RICAN



RATIONALE

This module presents a comprehensive overview of the background of the Puerto Rican migration to the United States. The module examines the dynamics of the migration, including information on the cultural roots of the migrants. At the same time, the current situation of the migrants is presented together with relevant statistical information. It is hoped that the participant will gain a better understanding of the Puerto Rican migrant through an increased awareness of the migrant's situation in the United States.

OBJECTIVES

Given a series of learning alternatives on the Puerto Rican migration to the United states, the participant will be able to:

-describe the cultural roots of the migrants

-list reasons for the migration after 1898

-characterize the migration since 1950

-explain how Puerto Rican migration differs from that of other migrant groups

PRE-ASSESSMENT

To assess your prior mastery of the terminal objectives of this unit of work, complete the following exercise.

Directions: Answer the following in short essay form:

I. Describe the cultural roots of Puerto Rican migrants.

II. What were the reasons for the migration after 1898?

III. Characterize the migration since 1950.

IV. How does Puerto Rican migration differ from that of other migrant groups?

LEARNING ALTERNATIVES

I. Read the narrative "The Puerto Rican Migration: by Rafael W. Ramirez-de-Arellano y Lynch (included in the module). Be prepared to answer the following questions:

1. Who were the first Puerto Ricans?
2. When did they first come into contact with Europeans?
3. How was Taino society organized?
4. What did the Tainos manufacture?
5. Were the Tainos able to travel around the Caribbean area?
6. Lid the Tainos have a religion?
7. Have Tainos disappeared completely from Puerto Rico?
8. What institutions did the Spaniards bring to Puerto Rico?
9. When were Blacks first brought in large numbers to Puerto Rico?
10. What has been the scope of the Black contribution to Puerto Rican culture?
11. Has Puerto Rico received immigrants from European countries other than Spain?
12. Which are the most recent groups to migrate to Puerto Rico?
13. How was Puerto Rico's population distributed in 1898?
14. What did most Puerto Ricans do for a living in 1898?
15. How did Puerto Ricans go about having social contacts in the latter part of the 19th centruy?
16. How did the U.S. occupation affect Puerto Rico's economy during the first five decades of the 20th century?
17. How have U.S. laws affected Puerto Rican commercial activity?
18. How did sugar cultivation affect the economy of Puerto Rico?

19. How did Puerto Rican farmers lose their land?

20. Where did the farmers go after losing their land?

21. What role has U.S. Global policy had in stimulating the migration of Puerto Ricans?

22. How has the rapid industrialization of Puerto Rico affected Puerto Rican migratory patterns?

23. Why are some Puerto Ricans "seasonal migrants"?

24. How did air travel affect migration of Puerto Ricans after World War II?

25. How are nuclei for new communities of Puerto Ricans formed in the U.S.?

26. Why do Puerto Ricans enjoy freedom of movement within the U.S?

27. When did the Puerto Rican migration start?

28. Were there many Puerto Ricans in the U.S. prior to 1950?

29. Where have most Puerto Rican migrants settled after 1950?

30. Which parts of the U.S. hold the greatest numbers of Puerto Ricans according to 1970 census figures?

31. In what kinds of occupations are Puerto Ricans employed?

32. Why do most Puerto Ricans come to the U.S. nowadays?

33. How has the rise in Puerto Rico's standard of living affected migration?

34. What is the main problem faced by Puerto Rican migrants in the U.S.?

35. What other problems do Puerto Ricans encounter?

36. What are Puerto Ricans doing in order to solve these problems?

II. Select one of the following:

A. Read the tables on pp. 100-120 of the Census publication cited in the bibliography of this module. Prepare charts

which show the distribution of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.A. according to the following:
1) numbers of people
2) sex
3) age
4) occupation

B. Interview a principal or other school administrator in your area to determine the nature of the Puerto Ricans in local schools. Prepare a list of characteristics of these students which includes the following:
1) age groups
2) non-Puerto Ricans
3) local authorities
4) the media

Prepare an oral, written or visual presentation on your findings.

III. Select one of the following:

A. Based on your readings in the module, library research, and/or consultation of sources listed in the bibliography, prepare an oral presentation comparing/contrasting Puerto Rican migration from that of other migrant groups.

B. Based on your readings in the module, library research, and/or consultation of sources listed in the bibliography prepare a visual presentation describing the cultural roots of Puerto Rican migrants.

C. Conduct a peer discussion comparing the migration of the turn of the century (after 1898) with the new wave of migrants after 1950.

D. Design your own learning activity.

E. Attend a seminar as scheduled by your module coordinator.

POST-ASSESSMENT

Directions: Answer the following in short essay form:

I. Describe the cultural roots of Puerto Rican migrants.

II. What were the reasons for the migration after 1898?

III. Characterize the migration since 1950.

IV. How does Puerto Rican migration differ from that of other migrant groups?

Competency will be certified when the module coordinator has ascertained that the submitted post-assessment is of acceptable quality.

Remediation: Alternate learning activities are available on a contractual basis with the module coordinator.

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NARRATIVE

"The Puerto Rican Migration"

--Rafael W. Ramirez-de-Arellano y Lynch

CULTURAL BACKGROUND OF THE PUERTO RICAN NATION

Culturally Puerto Ricans are the historical product of all of the people who have chosen the Island as a home. Many different peoples have come to Puerto Rico and the centuries of living together and sharing common experiences in the Caribbean have imparted to Puerto Ricans a distinct and definable character.

The first Puerto Ricans were Indians who lived undisturbed by Europeans until late in the 15th century. When Columbus arrived in Puerto Rico, he found that the Island was populated by a highly organized people who called themselves Tainos. The Tainos had settled Puerto Rico to a great extent, and lived in villages evenly spread throughout the Island. The number of Tainos living in Puerto Rico at that time has never been established definitively, but from the various sources available one may speculate that they amounted to about 70,000.

The Tainos were governed by a chieftain, called a Cacique, who served as arbiter and leader. The society led a communal life in which activities were strictly determined according to sex. The men went on hunting expeditions, and when the occasion arose, they acted as warriors to defend the village against outside intruders. The women tilled the soil, raised children and led a rather domestic life.

They also made their own houses and furniture out of local materials as well as long canoes from hollowed out trees. Some of these canoes could hold up to 50 people, and because of this Tainos were able to travel frequently to the neighboring islands.

The Tainos also had a sophisticated religion which recognized a good god, called Yucuiyu, and a bad god called Huracan. Tainos had minor dieties as well, and each Indian had his own personal idol or cemi. The religion was closely linked to their medicine, and, in fact, both areas were administered by a priest who was also a medicine man or bohique.

The families were formed by a man and wife, who were joined in a formal ceremony and were expected to remain loyal to each for life, and to raise their children communally in the village. Nevertheless, either partner could have the marriage union disolved by appealing to the chieftain of the village, but, in fact, these divorces were rare.

When the Spaniards came to establish their settlements in the early 16th century, they did not totally displace the Tainos, but rather accommodated themselves to the local folk and began a conscious policy of racial as well as cultural integration.

The Spaniards brought with them European institutions, such as the hierarchical social structure, the Roman Catholic religion the Spanish language, laws and the Hispanic way of life.

Yet the Indians showed the Spaniards how to survive in the tropical environment, and today, the Indian contribution to Puerto Rican culture is very evident in attitudes, customs, music, cuisine and also in the ethnic composition of at least 20% of the Island's population, which has traces of Indian ancestry.

Another important group of people contributing to form Puerto Rican culture are the African Negroes. The first Negroes came to Puerto Rico almost together with the Europeans, but they did not begin to form a significant part of the total population until the 18th century when they were brought by the thousands to work as slaves on the sugar plantations.

These Blacks came from all parts of Africa, uprooted from their land by force. Most were put to work in sugar plantations along the coastline, and eventually their descendants would continue to live in this area after freedom was granted to all slaves in the latter part of the 19th century.

In spite of their origins many Blacks were able to gain freedom throughout the centuries preceding the general liberation, due to the policies of the government which encouraged owners to free their slaves. By 1860, out of a total number of Puerto Ricans of African ancestry were slaves. At that time, the white and Indian population numbered 300,000 so that a very large portion of the entire population was formed by the 240,000 free people of Black ancestry.

The Black contribution to Puerto Rican culture has been significant, especially in music, dance, religion and other customs, as well as in the ethic composition of the population. At the present time, at least 38% of Puerto Ricans show traces of African ancestry.

In addition to the Spaniards, Puerto Rico received thousands of immigrants from Europe and the American continent. During the 19th century many people would come from Italy, Ireland, Corsica, France and even Russia. Other permanent settlers came from other parts of Latin America, and from Louisiana, and all would contribute to form the culture of Puerto Rico.

In the 20th century the most important groups of migrants have been the North Americans from the U.S.A. and in the past decade, the Cubans. The North Americans have come to Puerto Rico as a direct consequence of the War of 1898. Most work in areas related to the military, education and business. The Cubans are mostly people who work in white collar jobs, or for restaurants and small businesses.

In addition to all of these people who come to settle permanently, there are thousands of tourists who visit the Island all year round and whose presence is bound to influence matters in Puerto Rico.

The end product of the blending of all of these formative elements is the modern Puerto Rican. The most significant of these elements is the European of the Spanish variety which links Puerto Ricans to other Latin nations; yet one must take into account the important Indian, Black and Anglo-Saxon peoples

who throughout the centuries have complemented and enriched the culture of the Island.

When the U.S. Armed Forces invaded Puerto Rico, they found a highly developed society which had evolved mainly along European lines. Puerto Rico had been a Spanish province that had developed its character subject to the different historical forces present in the Caribbean environment.

In 1898 most Puerto Ricans lived scattered throughout the rural areas of the Island, which were recognized and divided into over 70 municipalities. The typical Puerto Rican family tilled the soil or derived subsistance from such activities as raising cattle. Other Puerto Ricans worked in sugar or coffee plantations. Life was sedentary, and most families lived far apart from each other.

Living far apart, however, did not hinder social contacts because the families were not adverse to travelling together in order to attend social activities at neighbors' homes, and it was not unusual to stay over when the occasion warranted it. Both men and women were accomplished riders, and would travel on horseback all over the countryside on these journeys.

Puerto Ricans also participated in communal activities of a formal nature, which were celebrated around the plaza of the towns. These social functions were usually festivities such as Carnivals, Christmas and "Fiestas Patronales" or onomastic festivities to honor the Patron Saint of the locality.

Puerto Ricans no longer travel on horseback, and many of the conditions of the past are history, yet many of the customs,

like these communal festivities persist, and still are very much alive.

It must be pointed out that during the last decade of the 19th century the population of Puerto Rico was evenly divided throughout the Island, and the most heads of families were landowners. The main cash crops under Spain had been coffee, tobacco and sugar.

DYNAMICS OF THE PUERTO RICAN MIGRATION

When the U.S. occupied the Island, the economic structure was to change drastically, and this was directly related to the new political status of Puerto Rico. Under Spain, Puerto Rico's coffee and tobacco industries had flourished and catered to European markets, while the budding sugar industry sold its product mainly to the U.S.A. When the political links with Spain were severed, Puerto Ricans found that people in the U.S.A. did not have a taste for the Puerto Rican variety of coffee, and that most of the U.S. purchases of tobacco were compromised to other areas. In addition to this, the traditional European market for Puerto Rican products disappeared for other reasons directly related to the events of 1898. One was that Puerto Rico was now subject to certain U.S. laws which hindered Puerto Rico's extraterritorial commercial activities, such as tariff laws and laws which forced Puerto Ricans to ship all of their products on U.S. vessels. Another factor which reduced the Island's contact with Europe was the outbreak of World War I, which, for obvious reasons, interrupted commercial activity.

The consequence of all of this was the economic collapse of Puerto Rico, which would keep the Island in a state of depression for several decades. The depression included the fact that for U.S. interests Puerto Rico only seemed to have potential as a sugar producing area, and consequently the development of the Puerto Rican sugar industry at the expense of the other secotrs of the economy was to take place at a

rapid pace. This took place in the first half of the 20th century, and by 1930 sugar accounted for the greater part of Puerto Rico's exports. Sugar was a cash crop, and since most workers were employed in its production, it meant that subsistence crops could not be produced in sufficient quantity to feed Puerto Rico's population without having to import large quantities of food from abroad.

Most of the large sugar producers were anonymous corporations based in the U.S.A. that had shrewdly bought up land in Puerto Rico, displacing the small farmers. The following quotation, taken from A. Diaz Alfaro's story Bagazo eloquently explains the farmers' predicament: "...first I was an owner, then a sharecropper, later on a field hand, and now, I am bagass..."

Under Spain, the Puerto Rican farmer subsisted from the crops he himself produced on his plot of land, and he also had set aside part of his land to grow coffee and tobacco in order to get the cash for the few purchases that were necessary. Now, under the U.S. occupation he no longer had his plot of land to provide him substence, and instead was forced to pay cash at a store for the same goods his land had given him in the past. In addition, due to the seasonal nature of the sugar harvest, the small farmer would not always have ready cash and would have to seek credit. Eventually he would be caught in a vicious circle in which he would have to sell more of his land in order to pay his creditors; eventually there would be no more land left to sell, and he would be penniless for many months and even homeless, as well.

Consequently, having been driven off their land in this way, many farmers would be forced to migrate to the larger towns, such as San Juan, where they would congregate in filthy hovels built over swamps, waiting to find employment without having the skills required for survival in an urban environment. Eventually, thousands of displaced persons would leave these San Juan slums and travel to the U.S. mainland hoping to find what Puerto Rico no longer offered them.

U.S. Global policy also had its effect on the displacement of Puerto Rican farmers. The military establishment actively found ways to enlarge its land holdings in Puerto Rico. For this they would expropiate large tracts of the best land, pay the farmers what the U.S. courts stipulated, and thus force them to leave their ancestral homes. This was done especially after 1940, and is still part of the U.S. military policy in Puerto Rico. The expropiation of Puerto Rican territory by the military continues to be a problem in the Island. The Navy, for example, periodically bombards targets near very populated areas in Vieques and Culebra, Puerto Rico, and many citizens of those areas feel that this is deliberate harassment with the conscious intent of intimidating the people so that they will leave. The more people leave, the easier it is to expropiate. After leaving their farms, the former owners eventually turn up in either San Juan or New York where they fall prey to many forces which soon have them part with their money.

Since the creation of the Comonwealth in the early nineteen-fifties Puerto Rico has undergone a dramatic economic development.

The enormous growth in industry, education, social services and economic opportunities has been termed by many a present day miracle. From a one crop agricultural economy Puerto Rico has turned itself into a modern industral nation and now offers its citizens one of the highest living standards in the world. Consequently, this has affected migration from Puerto Rico to the U.S. significantly. As the standard of living has gone up, more Puerto Ricans chose to stay on the island and enjoy the new opportunities in industry, and, in fact, within ten years after 1960 more people were returning to Puerto Rico than leaving it.

At the same time the character of the migration has changed. Many Puerto Ricans are seasonal migrants, rather like commutors, who go to pick fruit in the U.S., follow the crops and after the harvest return to Puerto Rico. These, for the most part, never have the intention of settling permanently in the U.S. like the migrants in the decade after World War II.

Other conditions served to stimulate the massive movement of Puerto Ricans from their homeland. One of these was the availability of inexpensive air transportation to New York City in the post World War II period, which for a long time was maintained in the region of $45.00 for a one way fare. Another was the demand for cheap labor in New York City and for fruit pickers in other states. The migration of farm workers was helped by the fact that representatives of U.S. fruit concerns would come to Puerto Rico in order to contract fruit pickers, and having contracted them they would transport them to the U.S. in large numbers on airplanes chartered for this purpose.

Eventually, many migrants would find permanent employment in areas close to fruit fields, and thus form nuclei for newer communities of Puerto Ricans.

Yet, for the most part, the migrant workers would return to Puerto Rico after the harvest, and some would manage to combine picking fruit in the U.S. with harvesting sugar and other crops in the Island. This is still the case for many migrant workers, who stay in Puerto Rico for the duration of the harvest, and during slack time travel to the U.S. for employment, and return again to Puerto Rico for the opening of the next harvest.

Lastly, it must be remembered that Puerto Ricans, like other Americans, are entitled to freedom of movement within the U.S., and like the <u>one out of five non-Puerto Rican Americans</u> who move out of their home state every year, the Puerto Rican just exercises his natural right to look for better opportunities elsewhere within the U.S.

MIGRANT COMMUNITIES IN THE U.S.A.

Puerto Ricans have a long history of migration to the U.S. As far back as the 1890's Puerto Rican workers had gone to Hawaii in large numbers to work in agriculture and to settle permanently in that part of the world.

During the same decade, prominent Puerto Rican exiles had congregated in New York City for the purpose of fomenting revolution against Spain, but the real large scale migration was to take place in the 20th century.

By 1910, according to census figures, there were Puerto Ricans living in 39 states in addition to those in Hawaii. Many of these early migrants settled in California after trying out Hawaii or other areas, such as Arizona, where many had come to pick cotton. This migration to the west coast continued, and for a long time, up to 1950 it constituted the second largest colony of Puerto Ricans in the U.S.

After 1950 the migration of Puerto Ricans to the U.S., especially to the New York area would grow to awesome proportions, so that by 1970 over one million persons, amounting to about one third of all Puerto Ricans, were living in the U.S. mainland.

Most of these post war migrants would come to New York City looking for better job opportunities, and either settle there permanently or move on to the contiguous states of New Jersey and Connecticut. From this eastern base the migration was to expand, and today there are large communities of Puerto Ricans in the Midwest and the South, as well as along the eastern

seabord and California.

The following figures give an idea of the distribution of Puerto Rican migrants in the U.S. as of 1970 (I just offer a selection of the distribution in the large cities which contain most of the Puerto Rican population; for complete figures, the latest U.S. Census may be consulted). It will be noted that the vast majority of Puerto Rican Migrants were born in Puerto Rico; nevertheless, New York City and Philadelphia present large numbers of U.S. born Puerto Ricans.

New York City.....852,061
a. Puerto Rico born.....490,037
b. U.S. born.....362,024

Philadelphia.....43,126
a. Puerto Rico born.....24,624
b. U.S. born.....18,502

The figures for U.S. born in the following areas are negligible, and are thus included in the total computation.

Chicago.....87,168
Newark.....37,240
Jersey City.....32,867
Patterson, New Jersey.....23,833
Los Angeles, California.....21,752
Miami.....17,962
Boston.....11,321

Bridgeport.....10,733

San Francisco, California.....10,250

From the figures one may appreciate that the vast majority of migrants are congregated in the urban centers in and near New York City. Nevertheless, there are other large colonies in major U.S. cities far from the New York area, in the North, South, East, West and central parts of the nation.

Most of the migrants of employable age, both men and women, are classified in the Census as "operatives, including transportation." There is also a large proportion of "clerical and kindred workers", and in lesser proportion, "service workers", and "professionals". These 1970 Census figures pertain to permanent residents of urban areas so they do not reflect accurately the seasonal migrants.

To conclude, the Puerto Rican migration to the U.S. mainland is largely a post war phenomenon. Most Puerto Ricans come to the U.S. expecting a better future, better life opportunities as is their right as American citizens. The problems faced by them are similar to those encountered by earlier immigrant groups in the U.S. Of the problems faced, the fore most is the language barrier. In addition, Puerto Ricans have to cope with racial prejudice in the U.S., especially if they show negroid features in their appearence. As the Puerto Rican colonies become more stable, and as the number of U.S. born Puerto Ricans grows, one may expect that cultural assimilation will follow the patterns set by earlier immigrant groups, and

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Puerto Ricans will find their economic status improving as more of them learn English and further their education. This is already being felt in New York City, where the community is asserting itself. A reflection of this is that a Puerto Rican, Mr. Herman Badillo, has been elected to Congress, and that more Puerto Ricans are begining to hold positions of influence in the City. Finally, it must be remembered that migration of Puerto Ricans to the U.S. has reached a plateau as economic conditions in Puerto Rico have improved, and the migration will probabl continue leveling off, unless, of course, forces of a political or economic nature develop and change this trend.